

shares the same values that we share, human rights, human dignity, rule of law, transparency in government, anticorruption. And this President, I think, is a special leader because he has made a commitment to those values. We want to work with our friends in the region to bring stability and peace. And I value his advice and judgment. I mean, he's—no better person to listen to on an issue such as Moldova than the neighbor of Moldova.

And so he came to the Oval Office. I asked him, "What I can do to help? What can we do to move democracy forward," because the President understands that a democratic neighbor is one that will be a peaceful neighbor.

Listen, we all long for peace, and we understand the world will be more peaceful as freedom spreads. Free societies don't attack their neighbors. Free societies work for ways to live in peace. And so this is a special relationship because of the shared values, and I am honored to call the President my friend, and I'm honored to call Romania a strong ally.

And I want to thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

Remarks on Energy Policy in Columbus, Ohio

March 9, 2005

Thanks for the warm welcome. Thank you all. Thanks very much. It's great to be back in the capital of Ohio. I have spent some quality time here. I have a history in Columbus; my grandfather, Prescott Bush, was raised right here. And down the road, my maternal grandfather, Marvin Pierce, was raised in Dayton, Ohio. I had to bring that up, otherwise Mother would call me. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate many of the great qualities of Columbus, Ohio. I appreciate the fact that you take your sports seriously. [*Laughter*] You've got the mighty Buckeye football team—understand there's going to be an interesting interstate clash next September,

mighty Longhorns will be coming up. Make sure you treat them as hospitably as you treated me. Looks like the basketball team can play pretty well.

And this auditorium has its own sports tradition. Last weekend you hosted Arnold Schwarzenegger's international bodybuilding competition. When the Vice President heard I was coming, he asked me to pick up an application form for next year's competition. [*Laughter*] Matter of fact, the last time I was in Columbus, I was introduced by Arnold. [*Applause*] Yes. My, have times changed. [*Laughter*] Now I get introduced by Bodman, who is going to make a great Secretary of Energy but not such a good bodybuilder. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate your willingness to serve, Sam. We've got a lot to do.

And that's what I'm here to talk about, the importance of a sound national energy policy. Today I visited a fascinating company called Battelle—really interesting place. The workers there have a motto. They call it "the business of innovation." Pretty interesting, isn't it? "The business of innovation"—to me, it defines the entrepreneurial spirit which exists in that building. The spirit says there's nothing we can't do by working together. That's what it says. There are important problems to solve in America, and why don't we just put our minds to it, to use our skills and our talents to come up with innovative ways to deal with the energy challenges of today and tomorrow. That's what I saw at Battelle.

People in Washington can learn from that example. We need to work together in Washington. We have had 4 years of debate about a national energy bill. Now is the time to get the job done.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us today. Pat Tiberi, appreciate you coming, Congressman—and Dave Hobson. Very nice of them to take the afternoon off. They flew down on Air Force One, and they're flying back on Air Force One. It's a convenient way to travel, isn't it, guys? [*Laughter*] I look forward to continuing to talk to you about Ohio and its needs and issues.

I'm proud my friend the Governor is here. Governor Taft, thanks for coming. It's good to see you again. Appreciate you being here.

I know the speaker is here. And I had the honor—Speaker, good to see you. I had the honor of meeting the leader of the senate out at Air Force One. I want to thank all the house folks who are here. I want to thank the local and—the local officials who are here. I want to thank the industry and business leaders who are here. This is a subject that should interest you, whether or not we've got the capability of working together to come up with a national energy plan.

I want to thank the good folks at Battelle, Carl Kohrt and Mort Collins, Bill Madia. I want to thank all the employees who were so gracious to me and Sam. I want to thank Greg Frank. I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate your interest in your country and its future.

Today when I landed, I met Betty Cheney. Betty is a volunteer with a local Big Brothers Big Sisters program. She mentors a fifth grade girl. She takes time out of her life to make America a better place by lending her talent and love to help somebody.

The reason I bring that up, there's a lot of talk about the might of the United States of America. And we are mighty, and we are influential. We'll keep using our influence to spread freedom and peace. We'll use our influence to protect the homeland. We'll continue to work to grow our economy, which is what I'm here to talk about. But the true might of America is not the size of our military or the size of our wallet. It is the size of our hearts. The fact that Betty Cheney has heard a call to love a neighbor like she would like to be loved herself is indicative of the true strength of America. Betty, I want to thank you for setting a great example by serving in Big Brothers and Big Sisters, by mentoring a child. If you want to serve your Nation, if you want to be a part of a hopeful America, feed the hungry, find shelter for the homeless, love somebody who hurts, and together, we can change America one heart and one soul at a time.

As the people of Ohio know too well, our economy has faced historic challenges. Over the past 4 years, we've had a stock market decline. We faced a recession. We had a ter-

rorist attack. We've had ongoing war. But we've confronted those challenges head on with good economic policy. And today, our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation. Last Friday we got more hopeful news about the American economy. America created more than 260,000 new jobs in February. We have now added 3 million jobs over the last 21 months, and more Americans are working today than at any time in our Nation's history.

I want to assure you that we will not rest. We know there are parts of the country which still struggle; parts of Ohio still struggle. Manufacturing communities were hit hard here in this State. I listened very carefully to the workers and small-business owners and local officials as I traveled your State last fall. And we're making—I know you're working hard to recover. And there are some positive signs when it comes to manufacturing. Factory output grew at its fastest rate in 5 years. That's positive for workers here in Ohio, but there's more to do.

This country must be the best place in the world to do business, to make sure that people can find work. We need legal reforms. The scales of justice must be balanced and fair, and we're making progress. I signed a class-action reform bill which will help make sure that people aren't driven out of work. I'm hopeful we'll get an asbestos bill that will make sure those folks who have been harmed by asbestos actually get paid, without driving good employers out of work.

One of the messages I heard here in Ohio is you're losing too many ob-gyns because of frivolous and junk lawsuits. We need national medical liability reform now, and Congress must deliver. We'll continue to open up markets for Ohio products but make sure the playing field is level. We'll make sure tax policy is reasonable and fair on our entrepreneurs. We don't need to be raising taxes. Taxes need to remain low so people feel comfortable about investing.

I'm going to continue to work on Social Security. Social Security is an important issue. It's an important issue because we've got unfunded liabilities that run in the trillions. This is debt to future generations of Americans. Unless we do something about it, we're not going to be able to pay for it

without wrecking the economy. I want all seniors here and seniors listening to know that nothing will change for you. You will get your Social Security check. The Government will keep its promise. I don't care about the political rhetoric. I don't care what the fliers may tell you or the TV ads. You're going to get your check.

But because baby boomers like me will start retiring in 2008—[laughter]—when I'm 62 years old, and because there's a lot of us and because we're living longer than a previous generation and because we have been promised more benefits than the previous generation and because there are fewer workers paying into the system to pay for people like me, younger workers need to be worried about whether or not they're going to be able to have a retirement safety net of their own. Grandmothers and grandfathers need to be worried about their grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I have put the issue on the table because I believe the President must confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations.

And I'm going to talk about this issue a lot. And I welcome Republican ideas, and I welcome Democrat ideas. It is time for us to set aside the partisan bitterness of Washington, DC, and come together and make sure there's a Social Security system for young Americans.

In order to make sure we have a growing economy, in order to make sure people can find work, in order to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America, we need affordable, reliable, secure supplies of energy. And that's what I want to talk about today.

Everybody who drives a car or runs a farm understands the importance of energy. Every small business which dreams about expanding his or her—every small-business owner which dreams about expanding his or her own job base worries about energy. Families worry about energy. And higher prices at the gas pump and rising home heating bills and the possibility of blackout are legitimate concerns for all Americans. And all these uncertainties about energy supply are a drag on our economy. It is difficult for entrepreneurs to risk capital when they cannot predict the

size of next month's energy bill. If small businesses have the choice between adding a new worker or keeping the machines running, they're not going to do much hiring.

As you learned here in Ohio in the summer of 2003, it's hard to plan with confidence if you're not sure the lights are going to stay on. During my second week as President, as Sam pointed out, I put together a task force to address America's energy challenges. Energy consumption was growing. Costs were rising. We had an unreliable power grid, and we were dependent on foreign energy. This task force sent back a hundred recommendations to improve energy policy, and we put some of them into effect. I mean, we streamlined the permit process to encourage exploration for oil and gas. We filled the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to improve our security during a time of war. We promoted new forms of energy conservation at Government facilities. We increased weatherization assistance by nearly 50 percent to help more low-income families insulate their homes and save on their heating bills. We've done some practical, commonsense things.

But I readily concede, these are first steps. This country must do more, and it requires legislative approval by the United States Congress. To meet America's energy needs in the 21st century, we need a comprehensive national energy policy. It's time for Congress to act, as I said earlier.

A sound energy bill must meet four objectives. It must promote conservation and efficiency, increase domestic production, diversify our energy supply, and modernize our energy infrastructure. And as we pursue all these goals, we will also uphold our responsibility to be good stewards of the environment.

The first objective of a sound energy bill is to encourage the use of technology to improve energy conservation. We're constantly searching for smarter ways to meet our energy needs. We're constantly looking for new technologies to help Americans conserve. I mean, it makes sense, doesn't it? If you want to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy, we've got to be better conservers of energy. The more we conserve, the less we use, and the less we use, the less dependent we are on foreign sources of energy.

One of the reasons I went to Battelle was I wanted to see what innovative ideas they had about energy conservation. What were some of the true brains of America thinking about when it comes to encourage energy conservation. I saw an efficient, affordable water heater that extracts heat from the air and converts it into energy that can warm your water in the shower. See, that's energy conservation.

The Department of Energy is supporting dozens of other creative technologies just like that one that will increase conservation. We're helping to develop lighter automobile parts that will save weight without sacrificing safety. That is a good way to conserve energy. We got flat panel computer screens that can operate around the clock and consume very little power. That makes sense. There's traffic signals that give off more light while taking in less electricity. Today, you can store your food in super efficient refrigerators that use less energy than a 75-watt light bulb. I mean, we're making progress about using technologies that will enable us to conserve.

We're also applying practical technology to help Americans make better choices about energy consumption. We want to help you make good choices so you become better conservers of energy. Devices called smart meters show how much energy you're using and then calculate exactly what that energy is going to cost you. Seems like a practical idea, doesn't it? "Here's what you're using, and if you use it at this hour, this is what it costs." It'll help you plan. It'll help you better conserve. It'll give you incentives to turn off the lights the next time you leave the room. The Federal Government is helping consumers make wise decisions at the store by placing Energy Star labels on the most efficient products. If you're interested in joining in this important cause of conserving energy, look for the Energy Star label.

I've proposed tax credits for drivers who choose fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles. We want to encourage you to make good choices. Innovators are advancing technology every day, and America needs to be the world leader when it comes to energy conservation.

Secondly, we need to encourage more energy production at home. If you want to be-

come less dependent on foreign sources of energy, you need to find more energy here. The need is clear. Over the past 3 years, America's energy consumption has increased by more than 3 percent, yet our domestic energy production has decreased by 2 percent. That means relying more on energy from foreign countries. That's what that means.

We now import more than half our oil from abroad. Think about that. More than half of the oil that we consume in order to maintain our lifestyles comes from overseas or abroad. And our dependence is growing. We're becoming more reliant upon natural gas, and a lot of it is coming from outside our borders. I believe that creates a national security issue and an economic security issue for the United States. And that's why it's important for us to utilize the resources we have here at home in environmentally friendly ways.

Increasing our energy security begins with a firm commitment to America's most abundant energy sources—source, and that is coal. Our Nation is blessed with enough coal to last another 250 years. We've got a lot of it. In Ohio, you know the importance of coal firsthand. If you don't, listen to this: When you plug in a television or charge a cell phone or use electricity, there's a 90-percent chance that that electricity is coming from coal. Coal is at the heart of Ohio's energy strategy, and it should be at the heart of America's energy strategy.

Coal presents an environmental challenge, and I know that. Most of Ohio's coal is high in sulfur. And that makes it harder for your good State to meet strict air quality standards. That's why clean coal technology is critical to the future of this country. It's critical to the future of the State. It's critical for the job creators of your State. It's critical for the working people of your State. It's critical for this country.

When I ran for President in 2000, I pledged to invest \$2 billion over 10 years to promote research into clean coal technologies. I kept my promise. My budget for 2006 brings clean coal funding to \$1.6 billion over 5 years, and that puts us on pace to exceed my pledge by more than 50 percent. It's an important pledge, because I believe

by utilizing the brains of America, like those I met at Battelle, we can come up with ways to burn coal cleanly.

And we're doing some interesting things. We're funding research into innovative projects, such as the process for converting coal into clean-burning gas. Think about it. We're taking coal—there's a process that converts it into gas that burns cleanly. A company in Cincinnati is cooperating with a coal plant in New Mexico to eliminate almost all sulfur emissions and turn the byproduct into a usable fertilizer.

Let me tell you something about something I just saw at Battelle that I think you'll find interesting. We got what's called a FutureGen project. This is a groundbreaking development. We're developing technology so that we can build the world's first coal-fueled zero-emission powerplant. I believe it's possible. I believed it was possible before I went to Battelle. Then I talked to the people who know what they're talking about—[laughter]—people on the front edge of research and development, and now I really believe it's possible. Someday—someday, we'll be able to energize this country.

I know it's hard. Most people have said burning coal without creating pollution was as likely as the Red Sox winning the World Series. [Laughter] Anything is possible. Clean coal technology advances—will advance, and when it does, our society will be better off. We'll become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To produce more energy at home, we need to open up new areas to environmentally responsible exploration for oil and natural gas, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; that's called ANWR. The Department of Interior estimates that we could recover more than 10 billion barrels of oil from a small corner of ANWR that was reserved specifically for energy development. That's the same amount of new oil we could get from 41 States combined. Thanks to advances in technology—and Sam was briefing me on what he saw; he just went up there to look at the technology that would be used—we can now reach all of ANWR's oil by drilling on just 2,000 acres. Two thousand acres is the size of the Columbus airport. By applying the most innovative environmental

practices, we can carry out the project with almost no impact on land or local wildlife. And that's important for you all to know.

You see, developing a small section of ANWR would not only create thousands of new jobs, but it would eventually reduce our dependence on foreign oil by up to a million barrels of oil a day. And that's important. Congress needs to look at the science and look at the facts and send me a bill that includes exploration in ANWR, for the sake of our country.

The third objective of a sound energy bill is to diversify our energy supply by developing alternative sources of energy. If future generations can count on energy in many different forms, we'll be less vulnerable to price spikes and shifts in supply. To create more energy choices, Congress should provide tax credits for renewable power sources such as wind and solar and landfill gas. Congress needs to continue strong support for ethanol and biodiesel. We're going to continue to figure out ways to grow our way out of dependence on foreign oil. Someday, somebody is going to walk in and say, "Well, we got a lot of soybeans, Mr. President, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of oil because of biodiesel."

To ensure a diverse energy supply, we need to promote safe, clean nuclear power. Nuclear power can generate huge amounts of electricity without ever emitting air pollution or greenhouse gases. America hasn't ordered a nuclear powerplant since the 1970s, and it's time to start building again. Many people have concerns about the safety of nuclear power. I know that, and so do you. Yet, decades of experience and advances in technology have proven that nuclear power is reliable and secure. We're taking early steps toward licensing the construction of nuclear powerplants, because a secure energy future must include nuclear power.

Another vital energy project is the hydrogen fuel initiative. When hydrogen is used in a fuel cell, it has the potential to power anything from a computer to a cell phone to an automobile that emits pure water instead of exhaust fumes. At Battelle, engineers have found a way to use hydrogen fuel cells to power the electronics on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The world is changing because

we're thinking differently. Technology will help us leap the old, stale debate of energy and environmental policy. We're providing \$1.2 billion over 5 years to help move hydrogen-powered cars from the research lab to the dealership lot. With a bold investment now, we can make it possible for today's children to take their driver's test in a pollution-free automobile. It won't help them with parallel parking—[laughter]—it's sure going to help us all be better stewards of our environment.

The final objective of a sound energy bill is to find better, more reliable ways to deliver energy to consumers. Some parts of the country, homes and businesses are receiving 21st century power through infrastructure that was made decades ago. Transmission lines and pipelines and generating facilities are deteriorating. Different regions share electricity over unreliable transmission lines. These strains on the system lead to higher prices, and they lead to bottlenecks in delivery. And just one piece of the power grid—if one piece fails, you in Ohio know the results, darkness across the map.

Congress can solve these problems in a few simple ways. Current law makes it optional rather than mandatory for power companies to ensure reliability across the electricity grid. Most of you consider it mandatory for the light to come on when you flip the switch. [Laughter] Congress needs to make sure that reliability on the electricity grid is mandatory, not voluntary, when it comes to our power companies.

We need to repeal the outdated rules that discourage investment in new power infrastructure. Incredibly enough, there's a law on the books from the Depression that prohibits new investment when it comes to expanding the transmission of electricity. That needs to be repealed. I mean, we're living in the 21st century. We've got a lot of work to do to make sure that we have reliable sources of electricity coming into our homes and into our businesses.

We need to make sure local disputes don't cause national problems when it comes to developing an infrastructure. Federal officials should have the authority to site new powerlines. Listen, we've got modern interstate grids for phone; we've got a modern

connection with our highways; America needs a modern electricity grid, too, in order to make sure that we can compete in a global economy, in order to make sure people can find work.

And as we grow our economy—and it's growing—and as we improve our energy supply—and you just heard a comprehensive strategy to do so—we'll also improve the environment. Too many people in Washington and around our country seem to think we have to pick between energy production and environmental protection, between environmental protection and growing our economy. I think that's a false choice.

Our economy is growing, and over the past 4 years, our air and water are cleaner. Over 30 years, our economy has more than doubled; air pollution has been cut in half. What I'm telling you is, there are practical ways to work together to use technology to make sure we can maintain our lifestyles, improve our lifestyles for future generations, and be good stewards of the environment. And I've got some interesting ideas on that. As a matter of fact, I've sent a good, innovative plan to Congress called the Clear Skies Initiative.

Clear Skies uses the power of free markets to reduce powerplant pollution by 70 percent without disrupting the energy supply or raising electricity prices. Let me tell you something, you need this bill for you in Ohio. That's why George Voinovich, a fine United States Senator, has been working so hard to get this bill out of the United States Senate. Clear Skies would allow almost every county in this State to meet strict new air quality standards while being able to keep your commitment to coal and therefore to reliable energy supplies and therefore to jobs.

Congress is debating the Clear Skies Initiative, but I'm going to act to get results. Soon the Environmental Protection Agency will finalize two rules similar to the Clear Skies Initiative. The Clean Air Interstate Rule will provide Ohio and eastern States with a practical, market-based solution to the problem of powerplant pollution that drifts from one State to another. This will help you. The Clean Air Mercury Rule will provide the first ever national cap on mercury emissions from powerplants and result in a 70-percent

decrease in mercury levels. These rules provide some of the same benefits as Clear Skies, but they are not a substitute for effective legislation. To protect the environment, to protect jobs here in Ohio and around our country, Congress needs to get a good Clear Skies bill to my desk now.

Thank you for letting me come and talk about some of the big goals that I've set for our Nation's energy policy. I'm counting on the boldness and vision of the American people to meet them. I'm counting on the letters and phone calls from the American people to let Congress know now is the time to act. History has shown us that American innovation has never been short of supply. I mean, we're an innovative society. Think about how much life has changed for the better. I think about how much life will change for the better because of technology.

And there's no doubt in my mind, we can leave behind a better America. No doubt in my mind, we can become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. There's no doubt in my mind, we can lead better lives through the use of new, innovative technology.

Again, I want to thank the entrepreneurs at Battelle, the scientists and thinkers at that important organization for showing me firsthand what's possible. I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to share my vision for sound energy policy, but hopefully, you can get my sense of optimism about the future for our great country. There's nothing America can't achieve when we put our mind to it. It's an honor to be here. It's an honor to be the President of such a fabulous Nation.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. at the Franklin County Veterans Memorial. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California; Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Jon Husted, speaker, Ohio State House of Representatives; Bill Harris, president, Ohio State Senate; and Carl F. Kohrt, president and chief executive officer, Mort Collins, general partner, Battelle Ventures, William J. Madia, executive vice president for laboratory operations, and Gregory L. Frank, executive vice president, Battelle Science and Technology International, the Battelle Memorial Institute.

Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Louisville, Kentucky

March 10, 2005

The President. Thanks for coming. It's great to be back in Louisville. Thank you all. Thanks for being here today. I think you're going to find this to be an interesting dialog about an important subject.

But before we get to Social Security, I've got some other things I want to say. First, I'm really proud of the job Anne Northup is doing as the Congresswoman from this State. She is smart. She is capable. She wants to confront problems now, before they become worse. She loves her family. She loves Louisville, Kentucky. Woody married well. [Laughter] So did I, by the way. Laura sends her best. She's doing great.

So, Anne, thanks. Thanks for introducing me. It's good to see you with your boys there. Boys, listen to your mother. [Laughter] I'm still listening to mine—[laughter]—most of the time. [Laughter]

Anyway, it's good to be here with Governor Ernie Fletcher. Governor, thanks for coming. I appreciate you being here. Lieutenant Governor Steve Pence—thanks for coming, Steve. The secretary of State, Trey Grayson—I appreciate you being here, Trey. Thank you all. Thanks for coming over today. It's good to see you all. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I'm honored you would take time out of your schedule to come and listen to this dialog.

Before I start on some public policy, I do want to say thanks to Monica Hardin for coming. [Applause] Got a pretty good following—very good, Monica. You know, why I want you to thank her is because she is a volunteer; she is a soldier in the army of compassion. She represents the true strength of America, which is the hearts and souls of the American people. She is representing—representative of the millions across this country who volunteer their time to make America a better place.

Monica works for Kentucky Harvest, an organization that provides meals to people in need. If you want to serve our country, if you want to serve your State, if you want